

SARL NEWS SUNDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2003

You are listening to Amateur Radio Station ZS6SRL of the South African Radio League, the National society for Amateur Radio in South Africa, with a news bulletin that is broadcast every Sunday at 08:15 Central Africa Time (CAT) in Afrikaans and at 08:30 CAT in English.

This bulletin is also available on the website of the SARL at www.sarl.org.za and on packet bulletin boards.

SARL NEWS invites clubs and individuals to submit news items of interest to amateurs to news@sarl.org.za not later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date. It would be appreciated if you could do it in both Afrikaans and English.

In the news today:

SILENT KEYS IN COLUMBIA DISASTER

HAMS ASSIST IN SEARCH FOR COLUMBIA DEBRIS

AMATEUR ASSISTANCE IN AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

PLC CONCERNS AGAIN RAISED IN EUROPE

SARL INTECNET RETURNS ON 23 FEBRUARY

Stay tuned for more details on these and other news items.

You are tuned to ZS6SRL. Visit the SARL Website or call the SARL office which is open on weekdays from 09:00 to 13:00 at 011 675 2393 for details on how to join, book sales and all related amateur radio activities.

The news follows in detail:

SILENT KEYS IN COLUMBIA DISASTER

Three explorers with amateur radio call signs lost their lives last weekend along with the entire crew of STS-107, Shuttle Columbia, as it seemed to explode, burn and disintegrate over Texas, just some sixteen minutes before touchdown after her 16 days in space.

Columbia was the oldest ship in the NASA fleet.

The crew with Amateur Radio Calls were Mission Specialists: 'KC' Chawla, KD5ESI, David Brown KC5ZTC and Laurel Clark KC5ZSU.

Students from Melbourne's Glen Waverley College in Australia were devastated. 16 Days previously they were in the USA to watch Columbia carry a school project into the void of deep space, a science experiment that took 8 'Aussie' spiders into the void, to test the strength of spider webs in zero-gravity.

The flags of the United States, the ARRL and the International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) flew at half mast at ARRL Headquarters as the Amateur Radio community joined the rest of the world in mourning the loss of the seven shuttle Columbia astronauts.

Through the Space Amateur Radio EXperiment (SAREX) and the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) programs, amateurs have enjoyed a special relationship with the astronaut corps.

HAMS ASSIST IN SEARCH FOR COLUMBIA DEBRIS

In Texas last week, Amateur Radio Emergency Service and SKYWARN volunteers have been assisting federal, state and local officials and relief organizations in their search for shuttle Columbia debris and remains of the crew members.

“Ham radio has proven to be the only reliable communications option during the recovery effort,” said Public Information Officer Tim Lewallen, KD5ING, of the Nacogdoches Amateur Radio Club. “The communications systems used by other federal and state organizations cannot penetrate ‘The Pine Curtain’ as we know it in East Texas,” he said. He said even local authorities were having problems with their radio gear.

Lewallen said federal authorities have requested that every survey team have at least one Amateur Radio operator along to help keep the recovery efforts coordinated and organized.

Alan Hayes, NE5AH, in the ARRL South Texas Section said “We currently have the infrastructure and portable repeaters in place, thanks to all of the volunteer efforts from outside of our area”. Volunteers have been making use of a portable repeater donated by the Garland Amateur Radio Club.

To date, Amateur Radio has proven to be the only reliable communications in this area of operations, and approximately 25 operators per day have been needed,” Hayes concluded. “Thus far, alternative communications from sources other than Amateur Radio have not been successful”.

AMATEUR ASSISTANCE IN AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

VK3ZWI reports that bushfires are still burning in VK3’s north-east and the Gippsland region in far eastern Victoria.

WICEN Victoria has been asked to provide operators for five air wing locations. WICEN in Australia is the equivalent to Hamnet here.

Good news is that there has been a reduction in the number of operators required at Ovens and Mt Beauty. Corryong is still very active with a large amount of traffic still being passed as the fires are still very large and out of control in the High Plains area.

In this news item and the one in connection with the Columbia disaster, which were obtained from QNews and the ARRL newsletter respectively, the facts are again underlined that radio amateurs are always ready to provide communications in disaster situations, that they can provide reliable communication where the normal systems fail and that they thus provide an important community service.

JOHANNESBURG 650 REPEATER TO CARRY SARL INTECNET 2003

The repeater that carried the first ever Interactive Technical Net, the Johannesburg s 145,650, has returned to the fold and will be carrying the 2003 series of Intecnets which start on February 23.

The programme on 23 February will feature Dr John Champa K8OCL, the Chairperson of the ARRL High Speed Digital Networks and Multimedia working Group. The group is part of the ARRL Amateur Radio Technology Task Force established to examine newer communications technologies for the purpose of assessing their applicability and adaptability to the Amateur Radio Service.

K8OCL will discuss the work of his group and highlight the recently announced “Hinternet” which is a high-speed multimedia mode capable of simultaneously carrying audio, video and data signals.

The interactive talkshow will also be carried on the 145,650 repeater in Durban, 145,750 repeater in Pretoria and the Eastern Cape Repeater network covering from Mossel Bay to East London and inland beyond Cradock. There will also be an interactive relay on 3718 kHz LSB and a transmission by Sentech on 3215 kHz AM.

The program will be on the air from 20:00 till 21:30 that evening.

Clubs wishing to join the interactive network and link their repeater should send an Email to armi@sarl.org.za with details of their repeater coverage, frequency and the telephone number to be linked. Please mark the subject line: SARL INTECNET2003.

PLC CONCERNS RAISED AGAIN IN EUROPE

The PLC debate continues in Europe unabated while in the USA the FCC has given assurances that PLC or PowerLine Communication will not be licenced until the systems and its impact on HF communication has been fully investigated.

The European Commission clearly favours PLC as a tool for market competition. Apparently, short wave broadcast and HF amateur radio are not considered as important. Only security services need protection. At the “Stakeholders” meeting as well as at the PLT working group meeting of CENELEC, it has been said that no official complaints had been submitted to the authorities whereas several thousand lines of Access PLT have been running for several months.

A group of Radio Amateurs in various countries where PLC is piloted are now assembling evidence and putting pressure on their governments to launch official complaints. Currently the widest existing copper network is the electrical power distribution network which is being considered and tested for digital telecommunications. Power Line Telecommunications inject wideband (0.5MHz - 30MHz) digital signals on powerlines for providing Internet from the “Mains” to the consumer market. The results are excessive interference on a wide range of HF frequencies. See short video clips of what PLC interference on HF looks like on <http://www.powerline-plc.info/video.html>.

In South Africa the position is not clear. While Telkom recently told the SARL that it is not considering PLC, the second network operator is still an unknown quantity. However it is an established fact that at least two of the partners in the consortium have extensive power networks and that one of the partners recently stated that they propose the use of the main distribution network as an effective and inexpensive way to provide Internet access as part of the bridging the digital divide campaign. To read more about PLC visit the Eurocom report on www.iaru-r1.org.

A HAM BIKERS BREAKFAST RUN

A Ham Bikers' Breakfast Run has been arranged for Sunday 2 March for all interested bikers who are also amateur radio operators. Meeting at the NARC at 07:30 and leaving at 08:00 for breakfast at Hartbeespoort Dam. Anyone interested should please contact Ray Webber at "zs6rsw@global.co.za" or 082 491-8758.

NEW EMAIL ADDRESS FOR SARLNEWS

The address for sarlnews at the Hotmail site, does not exist any more. All news contributions must in future only be sent to news@sarl.org.za.

This bulletin was compiled by George, ZS6NE and read byfrom..... as a service to radio amateurs, short wave listeners and electronic enthusiasts.

The SARL invites you to listen to Amateur Radio Mirror International on 21560, 9750, and 7082 kHz and 145,625 MHz in East London, 145,650 in Durban, 145,750 in Pretoria and 145,800 MHz in the Sandton area.

A repeat broadcast can be heard on Mondays at 20:00 CAT on 3215 kHz.

ARMI is sponsored by Telkom and Sentech.

The next net of the President of the SARL will be in three week's time on Sunday the 23rd February.

You have been listening to ZS6SRL, thank you for joining us. Also many thanks to those persons who supply news for our bulletins and the amateurs who relay the bulletins so regularly.

Goodbye everyone.

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